REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-19 and 22-36 are currently being prosecuted. The Examiner is requested to reconsider her rejections in view of the amendments and remarks as set forth below.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claims 23, 25 and 26 as being in improper form because multiple dependent claims cannot depend on other multiple dependent claims. By way of the present amendment, Applicants have amended the dependency of these claims to avoid this problem. The Examiner also objected to claim 28 due to a misspelling. This has also been corrected.

Rejection Under 35 USC 112

Claims 1, 5, 9, 18, 20-22, 24, 27, 30, 31, 33 and 34 stand rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. The Examiner objected to a number of instances of language which is considered to be indefinite. By way of the present amendment, Applicants have corrected these problems. In regard to claims 1, 18, 20-22 and 24, the term "based on" has been removed and replaced with "comprising." Also, the language of "comprising essentially of" in claims 1, 20-22 and 27 has also

been changed to "consisting essentially of." The active components have been specified in regard to claims 1 and 30 as required.

The units of measurements have been indicated in claims 5 and 31. The phrase "such as" in claim 9 has been replaced with Markush language. Also, the redundant compound has been removed from claim 9.

Claim 33 has been amended to recite steps as required. In view of all of these, Applicants submit that the claims are now definite.

Rejection Under 35 USC 102

Claims 1, 7-14, 17 and 20-22 stand rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by Asanuma et al. (U.S. Patent 5,478,646). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner states that Asanuma et al. teaches a polypropylene fiber having talc in the proportion of 100 to 10,000 as required. The polypropylene can be a syndiotactic polypropylene homopolymer. Also, the polypropylene has a dtex value within the range of claim 17. Applicants submit that the claims as amended are not anticipated by this reference.

Claim 1 has now been amended so that the fiber is described in terms of three features, all of which must be present to meet the terms of the claim. Previously, four features were recited

with only one feature being selected from the four. Thus, Applicants submit that Asanuma et al. does not show the spin finish consisting essentially of an aqueous emulsion of polysiloxanes with at least 25% active content. It is noted that in the discussion of the 35 USC 103 rejection, the Examiner admits that Asanuma et al. does not teach the application of a spin finish. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the reference cannot teach claim 1. Accordingly, claim 1 and the claims which depend therefrom are not anticipated by Asanuma et al.

Rejection Under 35 USC 103

Claims 2-6, 15 and 19, 24 and 27-32 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious over Asanuma et al. in view of Gupta et al. (U.S. Patent 6,177,191). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner admits that Asanuma et al. does not teach the application of a spin finish. The Examiner relies on Gupta et al. to teach polypropylene fibers having a spin finish. The Examiner states that the spin finish is a polysiloxane with an active content in the range required by the claims. The Examiner admits that Gupta does not specifically teach the draw ratio but teaches that the fibers are drawn to a particular degree which result in the dtex within the claimed range. The

Examiner feels that the draw ratio within the claimed range would be therefore rendered obvious.

Applicants submit that the claims are not obvious over this combination of references. In regard to Gupta et al., the Examiner states that it would be obvious to apply polysiloxane spin finish to a polypropylene fiber. Applicants agree that Gupta et al. does teach the use of an internal hydrophobic polysiloxane for the purpose of rendering polyolefin fibers more hydrophobic. However, the polysiloxane spin finish of the present invention is an external spin finish and it serves the purpose of rendering a higher bulk in the corresponding non-wovens. Gupta does not teach that the use of an external polysiloxane spin finish may achieve a higher bulk in corresponding non-wovens. In fact Gupta teaches away from applying external silicone finishes (Col. 1, lines 44-67). Accordingly, Applicants submit that it would not be obvious in view of Gupta to add an external polysiloxane spin finish with the fibers of Asanuma et al. to achieve a different purpose than Gupta, namely for the purpose of achieving a higher bulk in the corresponding non-wovens.

Furthermore, neither Asanuma nor Gupta et al. mentions in any fashion the connection between increased bulk and increased hydrophobicity, nor is such a connection obvious over the cited

references. In view of this, Applicants submit that the present claims are further unobvious over these references.

Conclusion

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims clearly distinguish over the patents relied on by the Examiner, either alone or in combination. In view of this reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of all of the claims are respectfully requested.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Robert F. Gnuse (Reg. No. 27,295) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By _____
Joe McKinney Muncy, #32,334

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000

KM/RFG/njp
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